

Rohitassa Sutta

(Samyutta Nikaya Devaputta Samyutta)

The purpose of what the Buddha explained was to point out the world and ourselves as it is. The more we understand the world and ourselves the more we overcome the world and suffering. This is the path to purity and liberation.

On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. Then Rohitassa, the son of a deity (deva), in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One: "Sir, is it possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there's no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn?" (*yattha nu kho, bhante, na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, sakkā nu kho so, bhante, gamanena lokassa anto ñātum vā daṭṭhum vā pāpuṇitum vā*"ti?)

Then the Buddha said "I tell you, friend, that it is not possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos (world) where one does not take birth, age, die, pass away, or rebirth." (*Yattha kho, āvuso, na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, nāhaṃ taṃ gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñāteyyaṃ daṭṭheyyaṃ patteyyanti vadāmi*"ti.)

It's incredible, sir, it's amazing, how well said this was by Master Gotama: 'Reverend, I say it's not possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there's no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn.' (*Acchariyaṃ, bhante, abbhutaṃ, bhante. Yāvasubhāsitamidaṃ, bhante, bhagavatā: 'yattha kho, āvuso, na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, nāhaṃ taṃ gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñāteyyaṃ daṭṭheyyaṃ patteyyanti vadāmi*'ti.)

Once I was a seer named Rohitassa, a student of Bhoja, a powerful sky-walker. My speed was as fast as that of a strong archer—well-trained, a practiced hand, a practiced sharp-shooter—shooting a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree. My stride stretched as far as the east sea is from the west. To me, endowed with such speed, such a stride, there came the desire: 'I will go traveling to the end of the cosmos.' I—with a one-hundred year life, a one-hundred year span—spent one hundred years traveling—apart from the time spent on eating, drinking, chewing & tasting, urinating & defecating, and sleeping to fight off weariness—but without reaching the end of the cosmos I died along the way. So it is amazing, lord, and awesome, how well that has been said by the Blessed One: 'I tell you, friend, that it is not possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one does not take birth, age, die, pass away, or rebirth.'"

[When this was said, the Blessed One responded:] "I tell you, friend, that it is not possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one does not take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear. But at the same time, I tell you that there is no making an end of suffering & stress without reaching the end of the cosmos. Yet it is just within this fathom-long body, with its perception & intellect, that I declare that there is the cosmos (world), the origination

of the cosmos, the cessation of the cosmos, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of the cosmos.” (*Na kho panāhaṃ, āvuso, appatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi. Api ca khvāhaṃ, āvuso, imasmiṃyeva byāmamatte kaḷevare sasaññimhi samanake lokañca paññapemi lokasamudayañca lokanirodhañca lokanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadanti.*)

*Gamanena na patabbo, lokassanto kudācanaṃ;
Na ca appatvā lokantaṃ, dukkhā atthi pamocanaṃ.*

The end of the world can never
be reached by traveling.
But without reaching the end of the world (cosmos),
there's no release from suffering.

*Tasmā have lokavidū sumedho, lokantaḡ vusitabrahmacariyo;
Lokassa antaṃ samitāvi ñatvā, nāsīsati lokamimaṃ parañcā”ti.*

So, truly, the wise person, understanding the world,
has completed the spiritual journey, and gone to the end of the world.
A peaceful one, knowing the end of the world,
does not hope for this world or any other.”

The Supreme Buddha always pointed out what the world is. Once the Buddha says if someone enforces the world except six internal senses and six external objects, that's only just a word. The six internal senses are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. The six external objects are form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mental formation. Here the Buddha explains the entire world as our life experience. Further the Buddha explains our entire life as the five aggregates which are the bottom level of our all experiences.

We usually experience the world through our senses such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When objects such as forms, sounds, smell, taste reach our senses, we experience about the world. According to the conventional truth, though we don't experience, there is a world which consists with four elements as earth, water, fire and air. However, according to the ultimate or absolute truth the world is alive when we experience the world. If we don't experience the world through our senses there isn't a world. That experiential world which differs from moment to moment is also alive according to our present mental condition.

The nature of this experience is arising at the moment and ceasing instantly. Whatever we experience through six senses, five aggregates arise at that moment. Also, they immediately cease. Five aggregates are forms (*Rupa*), feelings (*Vedanā*), perception (*Saññā*), mental formations (*Sankhāra*) and consciousness (*Viññāna*). These five things arise together and cease together. They cannot be divided. We learn them by intelligence. These five aggregates, six internal senses or external objects are not permanent. They arise with the conditions at the moment, and they cease immediately when conditions separate. However, because of our ignorance we think they are permanent. Only wisdom can awaken us from this delusion. The nature of all conditions is that;

Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence. (*ahutvā sambhutam hutvā na bhavissati*). It means if we experience something now, it didn't happen in the past in the same way like now. Also, that present experience will not go to the future in the same way as well.

The Supreme Buddha preaches the highest knowledge which should be realized by the wise person who is skillful with his supernormal knowledge (*abhiññā*) as the five aggregates. Understanding five aggregates is the first truth of the four noble truths. The more someone understands the noble truth of suffering, he understands the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path that leads to cessation from suffering. If someone doesn't know this reality, that is the ignorance which is the main cause of suffering. All Buddhist doctrines focus on getting rid of suffering. Here we should especially have wise reflection which directly helps us to overcome ignorance.

In this situation to get rid of this ignorance, wise reflection guides us to live in the present moment seeing world reality as impermanence. Our real happiness depends on how much we are clever to live in the present moment. Here, it doesn't sound that we forget our past or future. We may have a good memory about the past and the future, but we don't run to the past and future without mindfulness. We see the past and future with full awareness. Buddhism never asks us to forget the past or future. When we think about something in the past or future, we have a real awareness that now I read my mind. Likewise, we practice to see the past and the future with full awareness about the present.

To make this experience permanent, we have to follow a path that is the noble eightfold path. It is,

1. Right Understanding	(<i>Sammā ditthi</i>)	සම්මා දිට්ඨි
2. Right Thoughts	(<i>Sammā samkappa</i>)	සම්මා සංකප්ප
3. Right Speech	(<i>Sammā vācā</i>)	සම්මා වාචා
4. Right Action	(<i>Sammā kammantha</i>)	සම්මා කම්මන්ත
5. Right Livelihood	(<i>Sammā ājiva</i>)	සම්මා ආජීව
6. Right Effort	(<i>Sammā vāyāma</i>)	සම්මා වායාම
7. Right Mindfulness	(<i>Sammā sati</i>)	සම්මා සති
8. Right Concentration	(<i>Sammā samādhi</i>)	සම්මා සමාධි

As much as we have a right understanding about the path listening to the Buddha's message, we are ready to practice other steps gradually. Day by day we go forward in this path wisely seeing the reality which is impermanence. These eight steps consist of three disciplines those are virtue, tranquility (or concentration) and wisdom. With the understanding of The Noble Eightfold Path, we form self-discipline in our speech and behavior. Discipline helps us to go forward in the path of purification practicing meditation. In purification of the mind, we mainly use two meditation techniques which are concentration or tranquility and insight. In the tranquility meditation, we keep our mind with a particular good thought. As a result of concentrated mind, we can live for a long time without suffering and stress, but it is not permanent and it can be changed. Here we

practice and develop our awareness especially in our mind and body. We practice to do all kinds of activities mindfully. Mindfulness is one of the most important qualities that we have to develop for purification of our mind.

Concentration is not enough to eradicate defilements completely. That is why the Buddha asks us to develop another step that is insight meditation for permanent happiness. Here, with the concentrated mind, we reflect on all kinds of things that are mental and physical on three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ).

They are;

- i. Impermanence, (Anicca-අනිච්ච)
- ii. Unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha-දුක්ඛ)
- iii. Selflessness (Anatta-අනත්ත)

We reflect on these three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ) again and again. As a result of practicing this world reality, we develop wisdom with the knowledge of impermanence. Simultaneously, we develop five qualities which are confidence (*Saddā*-සද්ධා), effort (*Viriya*-වීරිය), mindfulness (*Sati*-සති), concentration (*Samādhi*-සමාධි) and wisdom (*Paññā*-පඤ්ඤා). As the result of practicing The Noble Eightfold Path with mindfulness and wisdom, we gradually reach real happiness increasing defilements. Final experience of this effort is living in the present moment with full awareness seeing arising and ceasing without any desirable attachment or destruction. That is the highest goal of practicing the Buddha's message which is the world reality. Then we are able to overcome dissatisfaction, sorrow, lamentations and all kinds of sufferings completely in this life itself.

This is the path to make a real refuge that no one can shake. We start this path with good association. Then we listen to dhamma through them. Further, practicing dhamma we achieve the real liberation. Finally, we live in wisdom, the we don't depend on even good association since we have overcome suffering. No matter whether we have or not any friends we have liberated. Then we can live happily like a unicorn who has only one horn. That is the nature of the enlightened one. He likes loneliness. His supreme happiness is that living alone.

Put by the rod for all that lives,
tormenting not a single one;
long not for child, how then for friend?
fare singly as the rhino's horn.

*Atta deepā bhikkhave viharatha atta saranā na anna saranā,
Dhamma deepā bhikkhave dhamma saranā na anna saranā.* (Attadeepa Sutta)

Dwell with yourself as an island as a refuge with no other refuge!
Dwell with the Dhamma as an island as a refuge with no other refuge!

Oh! All conditions are impermanent,
their nature is to arise and cease
having arisen, they cease;
their stilling is true bliss.”

Actually, if we can practice mindfulness with right understanding and reflecting on impermanence as the Buddha stated, all other qualities such as confidence, energy, concentration and wisdom also increase gradually. Therefore, we should always try to be mindful about our mind and body. Practicing mindfulness means we are on the path of liberation from all sufferings. Then our real refuge is living in mindfulness. In this situation we don't depend on anything or anyone outside or even our physical body. This is the real result we receive through good association. Finally, our best friend is mindfulness. Then we are happy to live lonely like a rhino's horn. This is the noble loneliness which the enlightened one always appreciates.

“All conditions are impermanent, when one sees this with wisdom,
then one grows tired of suffering – this is the path to purity.”

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

“All conditions are dissatisfactory, when one sees this with wisdom,
then one grows tired of suffering – this is the path to purity”.

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

“All components of mind and body are selfless, when one sees this with wisdom, then one
overcomes suffering – this is the path to purity.”

*“Sabbe dhammā anattā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

With this understanding if someone can live in the present moment seeing arising and ceasing of the five grasping aggregates wisely with fully awareness, he overcomes suffering completely. Knowing the process of arising and ceasing of suffering is the highest quality and skill which directly helps to overcome suffering and achieve ultimate happiness for the wellbeing of entire life.

May the Triple Gem Bless you!

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